

## 10 Keys to Successful Living 2 - Don't Chase Shadows Ex 20.4-6

### God is jealous for your love

Not the kind of jealousy that is about comparisons.

The kind of jealousy that values a relationship highly.

*"Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame."* (Song of Solomon 8:6)

Jealousy is part of the language of love.

God is jealous for your love, for your devotion. He's jealous for your heart. Because there's a place there that belongs rightfully to him.

The second commandment is about keeping that place at the centre of your heart for no-one and nothing other than God.

Whether you're aware of it or not, that space at the centre of your life is what holds everything else up. It's where the whole weight of your world rests; and only God is up to the strain of holding your world together.

If you put anything else in that space it will just crumble and give way under the pressure; because it isn't God, it's something else pretending to be God. It's what the Bible calls an idol.

### Identifying idols

An idol is anything that's so central to your life that you can't have a meaningful life if you lose it. You look at something, and in your heart of hearts you say, *if I have that, then my life has value, then my life has meaning. If I would lose that, I don't know how I would live.*

### Money

A major idol in our society. (Ephesians 5:5)

It's not the amount of money you have that's the issue (large or small). It's the place that it holds in your life.

### Physical appearance

There is a huge industry devoted to telling us that we're not slim enough, or muscular enough, or that we have the wrong kind of body. And people sacrifice themselves to an image.

### Family

There's the traditional form where the idol is family honour.

Or there's the more modern version where people make their children into idols.

Or children serve their parents' expectations.

### Destroying idols

Idols are dangerous. They're worthless things, but spiritual powers use them to get a foothold in our lives.

But Jesus has disarmed them. (Colossians 2:15)

The way to break the power of idols in our lives is not to focus on the idol; it's to focus on Jesus and on what he has done for us. That will change what is at the centre of our lives.

"It's a lot easier to say 'yes' to Jesus than 'no' to the devil."